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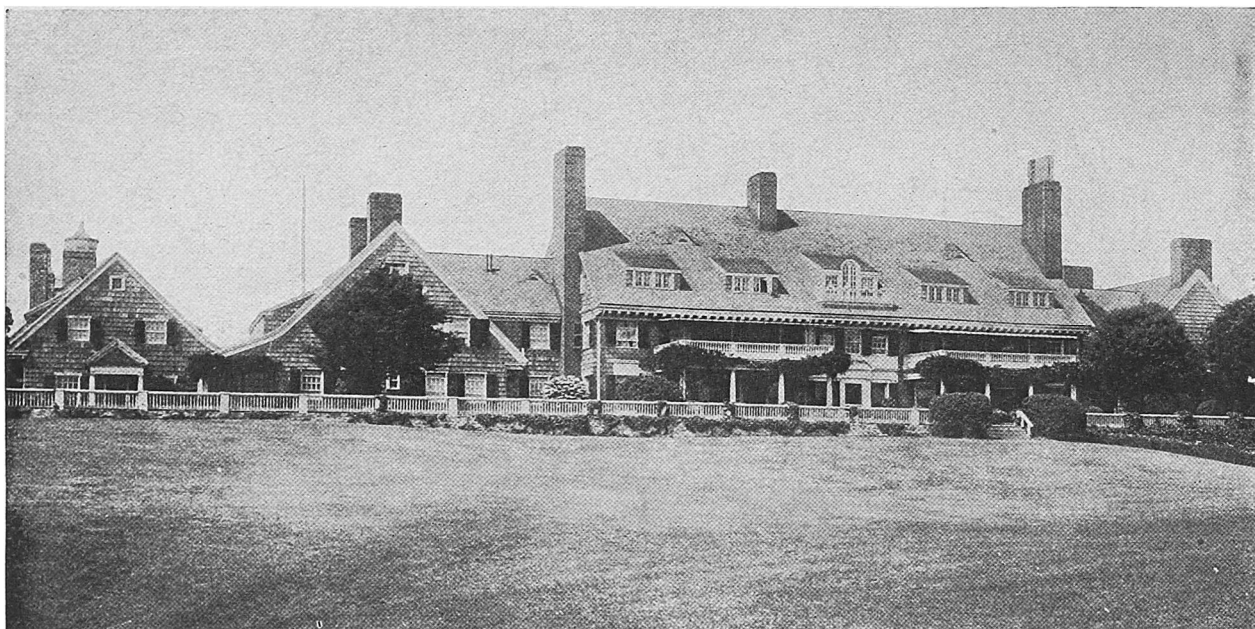
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"WHEATLY": A COUNTRY RESIDENCE AT WESTBURY, L. I.: McKIM, MEAD & WHITE, ARCHITECTS.

THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRULY AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE

By LIONEL MOSES

THE correct practice of the arts is founded on knowledge of their laws, which, by setting a limit on fancy, act as safeguards. But the laws should be used to prevent excesses of the imagination not to enslave it as would be the case if they were followed absolutely. It is the degree of liberty indulged in which stamps the practitioner as copyist, artist or innovator. It is the middle ground to which he should aspire and he should be neither too timid to depart from rigid rule, nor so vain as to endeavor to flout the old ones.

Here are a few maxims to guide us.

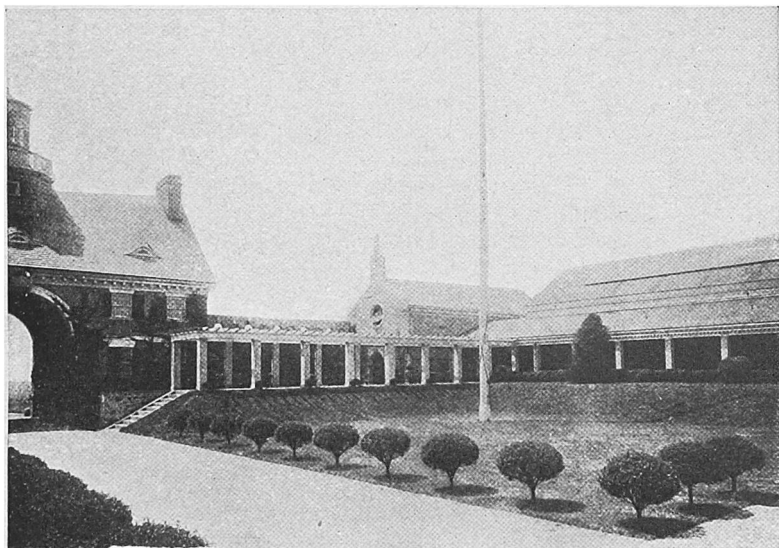
The strong ought to bear the weak: solidity ought to be real and apparent: the employment of all the parts ought to be justified by necessity: unity and variety are constituents of beauty: nothing is beautiful in architecture but what is useful or serves

some end: the parts ought to be subordinate to the whole: symmetry and regularity are inseparably connected with order and solidity: simple proportions are the most beautiful.

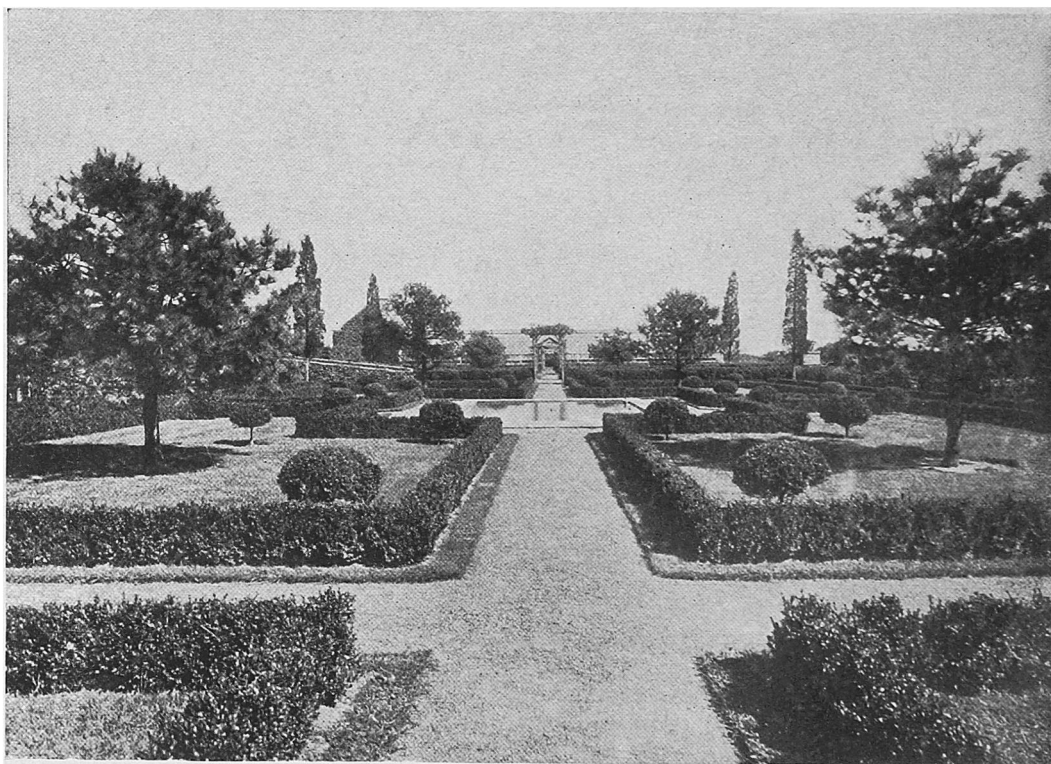
A President of the United States has written: "If houses are built simply and comfortably, and if each feature possess a definite and wholesome purpose, then, although they may lack distinction, they are never ridiculous or discreditable."

If the form in which this paragraph has been written had been slightly different, its force would be greater and its statements come nearer the exact conditions. Suppose it said that if houses are built simply and comfortably, and if each feature possess a definite and wholesome purpose, they are certain to have distinction, while those built otherwise are generally discreditable and oft times ridiculous.

Looking over the history of American architecture as written in stone and wood, one readily discerns the meaning which Mr. Roosevelt intends to convey. From the earliest times, our Colonial ancestors appreciated that simplicity and the "proper and wholesome purpose" of each part were of paramount importance in the designing and building of their homes or other edifices whether they were large or small, civic or domestic. On the one hand we have such examples as the mansions of Salem and the James River; the Massachusetts State House, and the New York City Hall; on the other hand the farmhouses and other simple residences of New England, too numerous to mention individually but so valuable from point of design that they should be preserved as a priceless heritage for



DRIVE UNDER THE ARCHWAY OF THE LODGE HOUSE.



ON THE LEVEL BELOW THE COURT ARE THE GARDENS, FORMALLY LAID OUT AND ON THEM FACE THE GARDENERS' COTTAGES, GARAGE AND LESSER BUILDINGS.

future generations. They should be guarded against that vandal, Time, and that greater vandal, the unappreciative owner.

The keynote of these edifices is simplicity; their harmony lies in their proportions; their melody in the feelings they inspire by their playful details and charming environment.

There are forces at work, however, which tend to preserve the beauty of the old work by recording the design of some of these lovely though humble buildings, and by reproducing them in spirit, as nearly as can be done by machine cut mouldings and ornament where hand cut work was once used.

It was not so many years ago that taste in art was at a low ebb, and buildings were erected which, by their ridiculous proportions and misapplication of ornament were the laughing stock of the well educated, and later of others. As time went on more and more were they execrated. Now we live in an era where, in spite of a decadence in some quarters, the tendency is toward true beauty in accordance with our maxims.

This renaissance was brought about first by a few pioneers and carried on by their pupils and admirers until now we are well on the road to the establishment, or more correctly, a re-establishment of a truly American Architecture growing out of Georgian, as Georgian grew from XV. Century Italian and Roman.

The house chosen for illustration is one designed by McKim, Mead and White and is at Westbury, L. I. It was built nearly thirty years ago. Since the original house was built it has been added to and the grounds embellished so that it stands today as a superb example of an American gentleman's country home, surrounded by towering locust trees, each one of which has been transplanted to its present position.

One drives under the archway of the lodge house into a splendid court surrounded on all sides by

buildings in character with those shown, and which contain, among other things, a huge living-room, a chapel, a swimming-pool and orangerie. On the level below the court are the gardens formally laid out, and on them face the gardener's cottages, garage and lesser buildings, the whole extending for many acres on the summit of "Wheatly Hill" from which has been taken the name now attached to the foothills forming a low chain running east and west.

In style "Wheatly" is markedly Colonial with a distinct flavor, in parts, of the Spanish mission, all so beautifully treated as to bring them into perfect accord.

Since the house was built, stucco has been substituted for shingles on the upright walls and this change has added to the general charm.

The small house shown is one of regular Colonial type and was built about fifteen years ago at Glen Ridge, N. J. It is now mellowed by age and shaded by well grown trees and shrubs and presents an appearance of having been built for fifty years.

One enters this house into a staircase hall which runs from front to rear. On the right is the living-room and on the left the dining-room, to the rear of which is the pantry and the kitchen. The second floor has, besides four ample bedrooms, two baths and the necessary linen and other closets. The attic contains three rooms and bath.

The plan of this house is what might be called elastic since its general character may be adhered to whether one is desirous of larger or smaller dimensions in building a country residence. It may be made to fit nearly any purse without loss of the qualities of openness and convenience.

The material of the outside walls would, of course, have a very decided bearing on the cost, but such a house would look as well in brick with the necessary changes of detail, as if faced with



SMALL HOUSE OF REGULAR COLONIAL TYPE AT GLEN RIDGE, N. J.

clap-boarding. The day of the canary-colored woodwork with white trim and green blinds seems to have departed, and for this we should be truly thankful. Nothing seems to be more beautiful than a house painted white, and yet it is well that the white should be slightly toned to avoid a chalky appearance. Nothing is richer for the color of the blinds than the green used in old times, and it is well to avoid, we think, many of the specially made up colors which seem to have been invented only for the purpose of being different.

It is possible to build a cellar under only one side of the house, omitting it, perhaps, under the living-room. The attic may be divided into rooms or left as the old time attics were for the storage of household goods. The possibilities for the modern sleeping porch are apparent.

The interior of such a house as is illustrated affords many chances for variation in its fittings. Wood floors of the highest type, such as veneered oak with dove-tailed joints, are suitable, if one can afford it, though comb-grained yellow pine may be used as a cheaper substitute. The woodwork

may all be painted white, including the doors, but should a richer effect be desired, the doors may be made of birch or some similar hardwood and stained like old mahogany.

The trim itself instead of being white may be of some hardwood without destroying the general character, and so we might go on offering suggestions.

There are many ways of decorating the walls. They may be painted such different shades of color as seem desirable, or papered with some of the many beautiful, yet simple designs, to be found.

In furnishing, it would seem as though one should refrain from departing too far from the Colonial period, and yet the proper admixture of furniture from which the colonial derived its design would tend to enhance the beauty of the interior and add to its domestic quality.

But whether we have under consideration decoration or furnishing we must be guided by principles which make for beauty. They must be searched for and found so that we may avoid grave error.

